



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**008**

**March 31, 2014**

By Staff Sgt. Megan Leuck

112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Wisconsin National Guard

## **Alaska Medical Detachment, Samaritan's Purse conduct joint operations in disaster response exercise**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** — The Alaska National Guard's Medical Detachment partnered with Samaritan's Purse in Palmer March 29 to conduct valuable training and provide medical care to simulated earthquake victims during Exercises Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014.

VG-AK14 is a regional, tactically focused exercise designed to test response and coordination capabilities in a disaster scenario modeled after the 1964 earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

Samaritan's Purse is an international relief and non-governmental organization that addresses the needs of countries that have undergone hardships such as food shortages, destroyed homes or natural disaster trauma.

The mission took place at the Alaska Medical Station in Raven Hall at the Palmer Fairgrounds. Soldiers assigned to the medical detachment worked with local agencies to evaluate and treat a large volume of patients with minor injuries. If a patient's injury was determined too severe for the AMS to effectively treat, they would transfer the patient to the Samaritan's Purse field hospital for further care.

Examples of patients needing treatment from the field hospital include: severe fractures warranting surgery, abdominal injuries, critical chest wounds and severed limbs.

The AMS and Samaritan's Purse field hospital were positioned adjacent to each other to provide the most efficient transfer process for severely injured patients.

Dr. Lance Plyler, chief medical officer from Samaritan's Purse headquarters location in Boone, N.C., considers this joint venture unprecedented in terms of a state government working hand-in-hand with an NGO in an exercise like Vigilant Guard-Alaska.

"We are honestly thrilled and we think it's a great relationship," said Plyler. "This is a real

- more -

opportunity for us to engage in an exercise like this...and really practice what we do so that we're much better equipped and when the disasters hit, we know what we are doing."

The field station involved an array of medical staff, to include: trauma surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, anesthesiologists, and physicians of other specialties, including pediatricians, internists, emergency room doctors, and a nurse support staff.

Once the exercise concluded, the AMS had admitted more than 150 patients and transferred over 60 of those individuals to Samaritan's Purse for additional care.

This exercise training allowed the Alaska National Guard and supporting state Guard units the opportunity to practice emergency response procedures in conjunction with federal, state and local agencies.

###

Photo cultines

140329-Z-DK135-010

A medical staff member of Samaritan's Purse field hospital evaluates a simulated earthquake victim at Palmer Fairgrounds during Exercises Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014, March 29. The Alaska Medical Station and the field hospital worked hand-in-hand to evaluate and treat patients affected by the earthquake scenario. VG-AK14 is a regional, tactically focused exercise and will have multiple interagency field-training exercises that are focused on the response and recovery from a major earthquake and tsunami. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Leuck

140329-Z-DK135-044

Medical staff members of Samaritan's Purse field hospital and first responders load a simulated earthquake victim onto a helicopter to be medically evacuated at Palmer Fairgrounds during Exercise Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014, March 29. The Alaska Medical Station and the field hospital worked hand-in-hand to evaluate and treat patients affected by the earthquake scenario. VG-AK14 is a regional, tactically focused exercise and will have multiple interagency field-training exercises that are focused on the response and recovery from a major earthquake and tsunami. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Leuck

140329-Z-UU382-001

Spc. Chantal Ledue of the Alaska National Guard Medical Detachment escorts a distressed patient at the Alaska Medical Station at Palmer Fairgrounds during Exercises Alaska Shield and Vigilant Guard-Alaska 2014, March 29. The Alaska Medical Station and the field hospital worked hand-in-hand to evaluate and treat patients affected by the earthquake scenario. VG-AK14 is a regional, tactically focused exercise and will have multiple interagency field-training exercises that are focused on the response and recovery from a major earthquake and tsunami. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Adam Kohl